

The Chosen one

- The word Muhammad is the passive participle form of the word ‘Hamad’ represented by the root HMD. Given that all Semitic languages use similar 3 letter roots, we can get some idea of how a word began and was changed by studying the same root in earlier languages.
- The SIN says that MHMD comes from HMD which means ‘to praise’. Analysis of earlier languages shows that the concept of praise is more often described by the root SBH. We see this in Q 15:98.
- The root HMD more often means ‘to desire, covet, wish to have or acquire for oneself’. Indeed we see the word used in Exodus 20:17 with the commandment to ‘not covet your neighbour’s wife’. The word rendered ‘covet’ is the Hebrew version of HMD.
- We see this in Ugaritic texts pre 1000 BC and in the Phoenician El-Amarna text from 14th century BC where HMD means ‘desire, take possession of’.
- We can see several examples in the Quran where the root HMD is used to express the desire or WILL of Allah eg 64:1, 2:30, 28:80, 34:1. Indeed 64:1 and 2:30 also use the root SBH to talk about ‘praising’ the ‘will’ (HMD) of Allah’
- Therefore it is more likely that the meaning of MHMD is not ‘the praised one’ but ‘the desired one’ or ‘the chosen one’

Muhammad in the Quran

Analysis of the Quran shows that the name Muhammad is used only 4 TIMES. This is most surprising when we compare how often other names/terms are used:

1. Rasul Allah in various forms 300 times
2. Prophet (Nabi) 43 times
3. (Musa) Moses 136 times
4. Ibrahim (Abraham) 79 times
5. Harun (Aaron) 20 times
6. Isa (Jesus) 24 times
7. Maryam (Mary) 34 times
8. Adam 25 times
9. Nuh (Noah) 33 times
10. Fir awn (Pharaoh) 74 times.

When these other people are mentioned, the Quran gives information about their kinship as well as to whom they were sent. In Surah 7 we learn the following details about prophets:

- A. that Noah is sent to his people
- B. That Hud is sent to the people of Aad
- C. Allah sends ‘their brother Salih’ to the people of Thamud.

In the 4 times that ‘Muhammad’ is mentioned there is NO personal information about him. There is no mention of his family, his ancestry or even his deeds and accomplishments. It makes just as much sense to read the passage using the word ‘Muhammad’ as ‘the chosen one’ as it does using it as a name.

Looking at the references individually.

3 : 144 *And Muhammad is but a Messenger. Surely, all Messengers have passed away before him. Would you recant if he dies or be killed. And he who recants shall do no harm at all to Allâh, and Allâh will certainly reward the grateful.*

Compare this with 5:75

5 : 75 *The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger, all the Messengers have (like him) passed away before him, his mother was a highly truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how We explain the arguments for their good, yet see, how they are turned away (from the truth).*

We could read this verse as ‘The Chosen One, the Son of Mary...’ and it would make sense.

So verse 3:144 makes just as much sense if we read it as ‘The chosen one is but a Messenger..’

Surah 33:40

33 : 40 *Muhammad is no father to any man among you but (he is rather) the Messenger of Allâh and the Seal of the Prophets. Indeed Allâh has full knowledge of all things.*

Surah 47:2

47 : 2 *But as for those who bear faith and do deeds of righteousness and believe in that which is revealed to Muhammad, for it is the very Truth revealed by their Lord, He has purged them of their sins and has improved their (spiritual and temporal) condition.*

Muhammad is not linked to any family, birthplace or tribe.

Both this verse and verse 33:40 would make just as much sense using the phrase ‘the Chosen One..’

In addition, the SIN is very clear that a man cannot atone for someone’s sins and that only Allah judges guilty or innocent. So HOW does Muhammad purge them of their sins. The New Testament however makes it very clear that God the Son was incarnated as Jesus of Nazareth and died by crucifixion to atone for the sins of all man. There are many verses that show this but the most obvious ones are

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

John 3:16-17 NKJV

“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:28 NKJV

So this verse makes much more sense if we read the word ‘Muhammad’ as a title for Jesus

Surah 48

48 : 29 *Muhammad is the Messenger of Allâh, and those who are with him are (also) firm and strict against the disbelievers (to accept their influence), but soft-hearted and compassionate towards one another. (Reader!) You will find them kneeling and prostrating themselves (in Prayer). They seek grace from Allâh and His good pleasure. Their distinctive indication is (apparent) on their faces from the illuminous traces of (their) prostration. Such is the description (of these attributes of theirs) in the Torah, and their description in the Evangel is that they (will be) like a seed-produce that sends forth its sprout, then makes it strong. It then becomes stout and stands firm on its stem giving delight to the sowers; (Allâh will in a similar way raise the believers from strength to strength) with the result that He may make the disbelievers suffer an impotent rage because of them. Allâh has*

promised His protection and a great reward to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness.

Nevo and Cohen make the case that this reference is part of a Surah that was interpolated into the Quran from a later period. They give the following reasons:

1. It contains official pronouncements that were introduced on coins in 692 and 699.
2. It contains the only references in the Quran to 'Mecca' and the 'Arabians'

Even if this is a direct reference to the 'prophet Muhammad' it is the only one in the entire Quran that could be so.

So in summary, what the SIN requires us to believe is the following:

1. a 'prophet' would receive a revelation as the last and MOST IMPORTANT prophet send by God.
2. He is supposed to be the exemplar for all mankind and he is supposed to have been given the word of God.
3. His revelation mentions many people many times and has detailed information on them

But this revelation almost NEVER mentions this most important of the prophets and gives us no information about him.

Not only is this not consistent with the historical evidence, it simply does not make sense.

Conclusion

The above analysis leads us to the following conclusions:

- The first appearance of the word Muhammad that can be dated with certainty is 60 years after he is supposed to have died.
- Where the Christians, Jews and Greeks had both a religious and cultural identity, the Arabs did not. It would have been politically expedient to create an Arab prophet with an Arab scripture. Note that this is conjecture, but it is consistent with the evidence.
- The idea of an Arab Prophet only begins to appear in 691 as part of the Arabisation process of Abd al-Malik, who ruled from Damascus. It evolves and gets more entrenched over the following decades.
- Despite the importance of this alleged prophet he gets next to no mention in the scripture he supposedly gave to the world.
- The word Muhammad can just as easily mean 'the Chosen one' as it can a proper name. Rendering it this way in the Quranic references makes just as much sense. In fact it could just as easily have been a title for JESUS.
- Thus, rather than being an Arab warlord born in Mecca in 622, the idea of a 'prophet Muhammad' EVOLVED over a 60-70 years in Syria and Damascus.

Nevo sums up the issue as follows:

"The linguistic evidence indicates that the word Muhammad meant not 'praised' but 'desired'. As such it was a valid Arabic name for a child, without any apparent religious meaning, long before the Mohammedan era. But the texts as we have them indicate that at some point it was adopted into religious jargon, with the meaning, we would suggest, of 'the man desired by God [as his messenger]-or as English might translate this concept, 'the Chosen One'. The first evidence we have for such a usage is the coin of 691 and the Dome of the Rock inscription of 692. The term Muhammad, like the term al-Mustafa, was thus not intended to refer to a specific person, but to describe an attribute of the Messenger of God, and especially in such a way as to contrast him with Pauline Christian

theology-he is only a human being, not a son of God, nor in any way divine; he can be anyone God chooses” [p264]

Muhammad and the Semitic Root H-M-D

(Markus Gross: Early Islam)

- Gross also notes that the concept of ‘praise’ is more correctly denoted by the root SBH rather than HMD. He states that ‘Praise’ as HMD is based on prior acceptance of the SIN
- The Semitic root HMD more correctly means ‘to desire, covet, wish for, acquire for oneself’
- When considering whether the word MHMD is a name or a title He notes that the proper names are used in the following frequencies in the Quran:
 1. Musa (Moses) 136 times
 2. Ibrahim (Abraham) 79 times
 3. Maryam (Mary) 34 times
 4. Isa (Jesus) 24 times
 5. Harun (Aaron) 20 times
 6. Nuh (Noah) 33 times
 7. Adam (Adam) 25 times.
 8. Fir’awn (Pharaoh) 74 times
 9. Muhammad 4 times
- He then notes that titles for Allah’s apostle or prophet is called Rasul >300 times and ‘Nabi’ ie prophet 43 times so the Quran is talking about a particular PERSON. If that PERSON was so important as a prophet or messenger, and if the Quran mentioned far less important people BY NAME, then WHY is the **most important person** only mentioned 4 TIMES BY NAME?
- He concludes that the word ‘Muhammad’ is NOT a name but an title/epithet that originally meant ‘the desired one’ and later was used as ‘the praised one’
- The root HMD first appears in Ugaritic texts around 1400 BC that describe how the god ‘IL’ allows the god ‘BAAL’. It describes the mountains bringing much silver and ‘desirable gold’. The word desirable is MHMD. Thus we have the use of MHMD approximately 2000 years before the supposed birth of Muhammad in Mecca according the SIN.
- It is also used in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Book of Sirach

The Dome of the Rock Inscription

[VOLKER POPP: HIDDEN ORIGINS OF ISLAM]

The Dome of the Rock.

- It is arranged like a Syrian Christian church that follows the plan of the temple of Solomon. Accordingly it has an innermost part supported by 4 posts and 12 columns (12 disciples of Jesus). There are inscriptions on the walls that make theological statements.
- This follows the pattern established by Heraclius who published his ‘ekthesis’ on Monotheletism on the walls of the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Constantinople. Heraclius did this to have a theological impact on quarrelling Christians. He was trying to settle the Monophysite/Nestorian/ Chalcedonian disagreements over Christology. In the same

way, Abd Al-Malik was making a theological statement to settle these continuing disputes that were dividing his empire.

- The oldest inscription is around the inner octagon. The following translation is taken from the website 'Islamic Awareness'. [The letters S, SE, E, etc refer to South, South East, East etc.]

S In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate. There is no god but God. He is One. He has no associate. Unto Him belongeth sovereignty and unto Him belongeth praise. He quickeneth and He giveth death; and He has Power over all things. Muhammad is the servant of God and His Messenger.

SE Lo! God and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. The blessing of God be on him and peace be on him, and may God have mercy. O People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion

E nor utter aught concerning God save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His Word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and say not 'Three' - Cease! (it is)

NE better for you! - God is only One God. Far be it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And God is sufficient as Defender. The Messiah will never scorn to be a

N servant unto God, nor will the favoured angels. Whoso scorneth His service and is proud, all such will He assemble unto Him. Oh God, bless Your Messenger and Your servant Jesus

NW son of Mary. Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised alive! Such was Jesus, son of Mary, (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. It befitteth not (the Majesty of) God that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him!

W When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. Lo! God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. That is the right path. God (Himself) is witness that there is no God save Him. And the angels and the men of learning (too are witness). Maintaining His creation in justice, there is no God save Him,

SW the Almighty, the Wise. Lo! religion with God (is) Islam. Those who (formerly) received the Book differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whoso disbelieveth the revelations of God (will find that) lo! God is swift at reckoning!"

- If one reads this inscription WITHOUT the influence or bias of the SIN, one cannot help but notice that the person it is most concerned about is JESUS.
- D. It mentions him by name 3 TIMES and then a further time as 'Messiah'.
- E. In addition it is a clear polemic against the trinity and the divinity of Christ. It also mentions the 'sonship', 'associate', 'say not 3' which are again clearly about the Christian belief that Jesus is divine.
- F. It talks about the day Jesus was born, the day he dies and the day he is raised alive.
- G. There is only ONE mention of 'Muhammad' and one mention of 'prophet'. Jesus was regarded as a prophet by many Christians. In addition the root of the word 'muhammad' ie HMD is also used where it is rendered 'to him belongs praise'
- H. the word Muhammad can just as easily mean the 'chosen one, desired one' rather than being a proper name.
- If one puts aside the SIN, it is clear that the inscription is an anti trinitarian polemic clearly stating that Jesus, while being THE Muhammad ie the 'chosen one' is just a messenger of God and not God Himself. If the SIN were true and the raider from Mecca were the 'seal of the prophets' then surely this inscription should have been all about HIM rather than Jesus, son of Mary.

[CHRISTOPHE LUXEMBERG: HIDDEN ORIGINS OF ISLAM

Dome of the Rock inscription around the inner side of the octagon is over 240 meters long and is written in Kufic monumental script. It has no diacritical marks for the most part. Those that exist are thought to have been added later by Al-Mamun in 838 AD.

It should be noted that we are under no strict obligation to translate MHMD as a proper name. It is, grammatically speaking a gerundival participle of the root HMD. In this sense it would mean 'being praised' or 'being chosen' or even 'praised be'..

Given that we already see the root HMD used before it, the word MHMD can be seen as a **gerundival participle** of the root HMD rather than a proper noun.

In addition, if the word MHMD were to be a name ie a noun, there would need to be some form of the verb 'to be' ie 'is' to have the sentence make sense. For example, we would not say 'John disciple of Jesus' and expect people to read that as a sentence. We would say 'John IS the disciple of Jesus' or 'John WAS the disciple of Jesus for it make sense as a sentence.

In semitic languages however, if one uses a gerundival participle of a verb, one does not need the coupling verb 'is' because the participle form is already a verb itself.

Therefore the sentence makes more sense to be read 'Praised be the servant of God and his messenger'

We see similar uses of the gerundival participle form for Psalm 118:26 and Matthew 21:9 ie 'Blessed be the one who comes in the name of the Lord'. The Arabic word for 'bless' is barak and the participle form is 'mubarak'. Indeed that is what we see:

'Mubarakun (blessed be) alati (the one who comes) bismi (in the name of) Rabb (the Lord)'

In addition we see that later on in the inscription we see the supplication of 'O God bless your messenger and servant, Jesus, Son of Mary'. We saw in the opening supplication it says ""muhammad" is the servant of God and his messenger". This is just the same supplication as the opening one with the titles reversed.

It makes very little sense for the inscription (which would have been authorised by Abd al-Malik himself) to spend so much time blessing the servant and messenger of God Jesus, if he really intended it to describe someone else entirely.

There is a long Syrian Christian tradition referring to Jesus as 'Abd Allah' or servant of God. Indeed we see in the 'Martyrdom of Polycarp (2nd century AD) the phrase 'praised servant' Jesus Christ which would read 'muhammad(un) abd illahi. We also see in Quran 19:30 where the infant Jesus speaks from his cradle and declares that '*I am the servant of God; he gave me the scripture and made me a prophet*'

There is also a substantial Christian tradition (the Cave of Treasures, the Book of Enoch) that spoke of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem as the centre of the earth and that the Messiah was supposedly crucified there. This would have given Abd Al-Malik good reason to build a Syrian Christian building on this site.

Luxemberg then reexamines Sura 72:18-20 using the hypothesis that the Quran was originally derived from a Syro-Aramaic 'pre text'. He notes that the standard translation has Muhammad in brackets, ie it is not in the Arabic. 72 : 18 And that the mosques are meant for (the worship of) Allâh, so call on no one (therein) beside Allâh.

72 : 19 And when (- Muhammad) Allâh's servant stands up calling to Him, these (- disbelievers) crowd upon him, well nigh suffocating him (to stifle and smother his voice).
72 : 20 Say, 'I invoke only my Lord and I associate no one with Him (as His partner).'

When he applies the rules of Aramaic grammar Luxemberg re translates it this way:
'And that worship belongs to God, so you should call upon no other but God
And that when the servant of God was resurrected, all the while calling him (that is continuing to worship God), they (the people) would almost have worshipped him (as God) (Upon which defending himself), he said (not 'say'): 'I call indeed upon my Lord, and I associate no other with him'

He notes that Western scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies have put their trust in the Arabic philology rather than use historical critical methods. The rules of Arabic grammar were not standardised until the end of the 8th century, nearly 150 years after the Quran was supposed to have been canonised by Uthman according to the SIN

Summary

- There was substantial tradition that associated the Temple Mount as a sacred site in Syrian Christianity and this would have given Abd al-Malik good reason to build a shrine there.
- The inscription on the Dome of the Rock contains Christological material and was directed exclusively to Christians who embraced trinitarian views of Jesus after the Council of Nicea (325AD)
- The inscription is directed to the 'people of the Scripture' ie Jews and Christians and Abd al-Malik is defending a kind of Syrian-Arab Christianity that believed in one God and saw Jesus as the 'servant of God' but not God himself.
- The gerundival participle *muhammad* ie MHMD was not originally a personal name but a title/commendation/descriptor for the servant of God, Jesus, son of Mary. The later writers of the Sira misunderstood this and assigned it to the 'prophet of Islam' who supposedly lived 570-632.
- We can therefore talk of 'Muhammad I'(Jesus) and 'Muhammad II (the prophet of the SIN),
- When the inscription refers to 'Islam' it does not refer to a new religion but being in conformity with 'the Scripture'. Because the inscription is all about Christology, then 'the scripture' must be referring to The Gospel, NOT the Islam of the SIN.
- Therefore we can talk about 'Islam I' (conformity with Christian Scripture) and 'Islam II' (the Islam of the SIN)
- As we have seen with popular inscriptions, The Islam of the SIN only began around the middle of the 8th century. Luxemberg notes that such a big religious change would not have happened without political change. We see that around this time, the Umayyads dynasty is deposed and the Abbasids consolidated their power around this time. They would not have wanted to follow the religion of the Umayyads so they adopted a new-'Islam II'. What the SIN describes as Islam is really an Abbasid creation.

Luxemberg's conclusion

'Islam I' was a pre-Niceness, Oriental Christian, Syrian-Arabian form of Christianity. This form of Christianity most likely survived in the region of Mesopotamia until the end of the Umayyad dynasty (c750), and perhaps even longer. This explains why Jerusalem was the destination for pilgrimage before Mecca enjoyed the same honor. This also explains the spacious precinct that lies around the Dome of the Rock and served to receive these pilgrims. With the Christological doctrine presented in the description on the Dome of the Rock, 'Islam I' desired to bear witness to its own orthodoxy with regard to Christian

theology, against the opinions of the Nicea that were defended in the nearby Constantinian Church of the Holy Sepulchre....Islam II refers to the turn from the (Christian) Islam I and, consequently from the 'scripture'. Other changes that resulted included the turn from Jerusalem to Mecca and the replacement of the 'Scripture' (ie Bible) with the (Arabic) Quran....

..These changes can only be explained in political terms. When the Abbasids took power, they wanted nothing more to do with their Umayyad opponents or with their religion. From this perspective, and from this point in time (c750), 'Islam II' slowly appeared. It is only because the Abbasids made 'Islam II' their national ideology that one can explain historically why Christianised Arabian tribes were suddenly forced to submit to Islam II"

[p145]